
FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INSPECTORS

OF THE

STATE ALMSHOUSE,

AT BRIDGEWATER.

OCTOBER, 1857.

BOSTON:

WILLIAM WHITE, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1857.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

INSPECTORS' REPORT.

*To his Excellency the Governor, and the Honorable Council of
the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

By the tenth section of the 275th chapter of the Revised Statutes, it is made the duty of the Inspectors of the State almshouses in this Commonwealth to audit the accounts of the superintendents, and to report to the governor and council, annually, the state of said institutions under their respective charge.

By a late Act of the legislature, approved by the governor in April, 1857, it is provided that the annual reports of public officers, now required to be made to the legislature, or to the governor and council, shall hereafter include the year ending on the 30th day of September, annually, and shall be submitted to the secretary of the Commonwealth on or before the 15th day of October in each year.

In compliance with these laws, the Inspectors of the State almshouse at Bridgewater respectfully ask leave to submit the following Report of said institution on the 30th day of September, A. D. 1857.

The time for making this Report having been changed to an earlier day than formerly, by two months, it will be perceived that this Report does not embrace the entire year from the date of the Report of 1856.

Connected with and constituting a very essential part of this Report, is the report of the superintendent, L. L. Goodspeed, Esq., which, in consideration of its general accuracy and the importance of its statistical facts, is recommended to the careful consideration of the public. And the Inspectors take great pleasure in stating that the arduous, complicated, and highly responsible labors and duties of the superintendent have been faithfully and satisfactorily discharged. Under his watchful care and management, assisted by his most estimable and kind-hearted wife, with several worthy matrons and other faithful assistants, the institution has been made, in some good degree, to subserve the purposes for which it was originally established.

Good and wholesome food, in sufficient quantity and variety, is daily provided for the inmates; cleanliness is the order of the day in every department; and the diseased and helpless are kindly cared for.

A faithful physician, with the necessary number of nurses, are in daily attendance upon the sick, the maimed, the blind, and such as are worn threadbare with age and decrepitude.

By the report of the physician, which is also made a part of this Report, it will be seen that the number of the sick and diseased is large, and that the number of deaths has been greater than in previous years. This was not unexpected, from the fact that a much greater number than usual of those admitted to the almshouse, during the past year, were hopeless cases when admitted; a greater number of those in the very last stages of disease; of persons long diseased and who had been sadly neglected; and a greater number of very aged and infirm persons.

It will be seen by the physician's report, also, that more than one in four of the deaths in the hospitals of the institution has been by that fell destroyer, consumption. Twenty-five of the number of deaths in the almshouse, during the past year, were of persons over seventy-five years of age. It is believed that not an individual admitted to the almshouse in health, during the past year, has died; but very many of the children born in the almshouse, whose parents, one or both, were dissipated or badly diseased, have lived but a few short hours, or days, at most.

The buildings of the institution are in good repair; the apartments for the hospitals, for lodging, for dining-halls, for workshops, and for culinary purposes, are well arranged and furnished for the comfort of those who occupy them, both the sick and those in health. The rooms are well ventilated and warmed; and the inmates, with a due regard to the dictates of humanity and the principles of economy, are made as comfortable as, in their situation and circumstances, they can be.

Two schools connected with the almshouse—one for boys, the other for girls—have been regularly kept, in which the children are taught the preliminary branches of an education, and in which commendable proficiency has been made.

As our schools are the basis and the safeguards of our liberty and of our free institutions, and as it is required of every one that he shall be able to read and write before he can vote, it is deemed important that the unfortunate children placed in the almshouse should be trained, as far as may be, for the duties of maturer life.

Public worship is regularly attended on each Sabbath, by such of the inmates as are able to be present, in the chapel of the almshouse. Rev. Leonard Pratt, the chaplain, usually officiates. By his faithful services, the chaplain has been instrumental in doing much good, particularly among the children.

Those who are able to labor, the number of whom is comparatively small, are required to work, some upon the farm, some in the hospitals, others in cooking, washing, and in whatever they can be employed to the best advantage.

Great improvements have been made upon the farm and buildings, both in utility and appearance; waste places have been cleared and cultivated, and large tracts of massive walls have been built upon the farm; additions have been made to the barn; repairs and improvements have been made upon many of the buildings for the comfort of the inmates; large piggeries have been built, and other improvements, deemed necessary, have been made, both upon the farm and the buildings of the institution.

The expenses of the institution have been increased, though not largely. The reasons for this are, that the number of the inmates have been greater, the number of the sick and disabled

larger, and, consequently, the number of laborers has been less, and more outside laborers to be paid. The additions to the buildings, and the improvements upon the farm, have also, of necessity, increased the expense. The repeal of the law giving to towns compensation for keeping paupers, though an excellent measure and one that was much needed, has, as was expected, and of necessity, increased the number of inmates.

The Inspectors most heartily concur with the remarks of the superintendent, in the utility of the institution, in the humane and charitable purposes of the legislature in founding it, and in the amount of suffering and wretchedness it has assuaged, mitigated, and prevented.

The Inspectors would again respectfully suggest that, in their humble opinion, still further amendments to the pauper laws might be profitably made, to reduce the expenses of their support, and to prevent many of the impositions now practiced by a portion of the applicants for admission to the almshouse.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES FORD,	}	<i>Inspectors.</i>
WM. B. MAY,		
J. F. MURDOCH,		

STATE ALMSHOUSE, BRIDGEWATER,	}
September 30, 1857.	

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

To the Inspectors of the State Pauper Establishment, at Bridgewater.

GENTLEMEN:—The following statement is respectfully submitted, as showing the condition and management of the institution for the ten past months, ending September 30, 1857.

SUMMARY OF INMATES.

Number of persons in the house, Dec. 1, 1856,	. . . . .	585
Admitted since, including fifty-five born in the house,	. . . . .	1,254
Whole number who have been supported since last report,	. . . . .	1,839

Number discharged and indentured,	. . . . .	987
eloped,	. . . . .	28
died,	. . . . .	226

Remaining October 1, 1857:—

Men,	. . . . .	173
Women,	. . . . .	201
Boys under 15 years of age,	. . . . .	121
Girls,	. . . . .	103
Total,	. . . . .	598

Of the number discharged, eighty-five have been returned at the Commonwealth's expense, to places where they had a legal claim for support. In regard to the others discharged, the same course, as formerly, has been pursued—giving all an opportunity, who were thought capable, to make an effort to obtain their own living. Of the more *unfortunate* class, such

as are permanently diseased, either mentally or physically, none have been discharged without assurance first being given, by the friends making the applications, that, if intrusted to their custody, they would receive such care and treatment as their condition demanded.

EXPENDITURES.

By an Act of the legislature of 1857, the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars was appropriated for ventilating the main building, repairing pest-house, enlarging barn, and building a piggery.

The above sum has been expended for the several purposes named in the "Resolve," and drawn from the treasury on presentation of the bills to the auditor, accompanied with a certificate from the board of inspectors, declaring it properly and legally expended.

The expenditures, current, have been as follows, viz. :—

For salaries of officers,	.	.	.	.	.	\$5,811	00
Beef and pork, (fresh and salt,)	.	.	.	.	.	3,127	24
Junk,	.	.	.	.	.	281	82
Milk,	.	.	.	.	.	1,098	89
Clothing,	.	.	.	.	.	620	70
Flour,	.	.	.	.	.	6,027	72
Crackers,	.	.	.	.	.	393	39
Shoes and leather,	.	.	.	.	.	407	00
Crockery and tin ware,	.	.	.	.	.	187	76
Medicines for hospital,	.	.	.	.	.	376	49
Tea, coffee, and chocolate,	.	.	.	.	.	747	15
Dry goods,	.	.	.	.	.	1,452	99
Hay and straw,	.	.	.	.	.	770	57
Farming tools and seeds,	.	.	.	.	.	151	73
Butter and cheese,	.	.	.	.	.	407	55
Fish,	.	.	.	.	.	317	60
Beans,	.	.	.	.	.	118	69
Returning paupers,	.	.	.	.	.	354	53
Beef cattle and other stock,	.	.	.	.	.	961	38
Transportation of merchandise,	.	.	.	.	.	738	87
Castings, door-strips, &c.,	.	.	.	.	.	70	26
Soap,	.	.	.	.	.	273	38

For Corn, meal, and oats,	\$646 74
Furnace pipe and repairs,	32 20
Apples,	24 50
Sweet potatoes,	12 00
Carriages and harnesses,	274 00
Raisins,	34 76
Salt,	39 62
Oil,	175 74
Small groceries,	173 25
Sugar and molasses,	863 48
Tobacco and snuff,	99 12
Labor of mechanics on repairs,	175 34
Books, stationery, and post-office expense,	57 20
Coal and wood,	2,236 12
Baskets, clothes-lines, and pins,	24 89
Hops and malt,	44 34
Rice,	128 20
Nails, glass, and putty,	47 64
Brooms,	42 50
Pump and gear,	156 23
Furniture and bedding,	189 20
Total,	<u>\$30,173 78</u>

CASH RECEIVED.

Sales from farm, money left by inmates deceased, and board of horse,	\$1,146 70
From State treasurer, (monthly,)	29,027 08
Total,	<u>\$30,173 78</u>

From the above sum deduct the value of oakum sold, and now on hand; also beef stock; amounting to \$572.10, they being the principal items, by which the inventory of this year would exceed that of the past, and the balance is the cost of supporting the inmates, for the ten past months, viz., \$29,601.68.

The cost of supporting each single inmate has been	\$49 60
Cost of supporting each, per week, is	1 14

The general condition of the institution, so far as relates to the buildings, repairs, system and discipline, &c., have been presented in my former reports. In the agricultural department, however, decided improvement has been made during the past year. Fields heretofore uncultivated and unproductive have been cleared, subdued, and brought under a proper state of cultivation. Solid and durable walls have been built, adding greatly to the beauty and value of the estate. The farming operations have received their full share of attention, and crops more bountiful than ever are promised. As, however, the time of harvest has not yet arrived, it is impossible to give, in detail, the probable results of the season. Considering the number of inmates of the institution, it might seem that more should be accomplished in agriculture than actually is; but it should be remembered that, so far as labor is concerned, they are extremely unreliable, being either too old or too young, or too feeble in mind or body, to be of much real service. During the winter season we have a large number of able-bodied men capable of performing much labor; but the season for labor is past, and their energies cannot be directed to any useful purpose. They are thus "help-eats," and not "help-meets" to the establishment; and when seed time arrives, and the earth invites the laborer to the toils of the fields, they quit our hospitalities, and go forth for the summer to work for themselves, leaving behind them but a small number of the feebler and more dependent portion of their company to toil for their next winter's support, when again many of them will return to share the bounty of the Commonwealth. Such are the difficulties under which we are obliged to labor, in the cultivation of our fields, producing our harvests, and in improving the condition and appearance of the estate belonging to the institution.

As heretofore, two schools have been kept—one for each sex—and, considering the extreme ignorance of a majority of the children when admitted, and the constant changing of the pupils through the year, I am satisfied that, in this department, there has been a good degree of interest manifested, and the progress made quite as satisfactory as could reasonably be expected.

As considerable discussion has arisen upon the subject of classification of State paupers, and frequent modifications of the

existing statute, in this matter, have been proposed and advocated from time to time, I beg leave to state, as the result of my experience, that the present statute (chapter 171, section 3, passed in the year 1856) is, in my opinion, better calculated to promote the interests of this, and the other similar institutions, than any other which has existed or been proposed; and I doubt very much the expediency of any modification or repeal thereof at present.

Many of the reasons which lead me to this conclusion were stated in my former reports upon the subject, and I can only say that the opinions then entertained by me have since been strengthened and confirmed.

Moral and religious instruction has been given to those under our care. The chaplain, as heretofore, has conducted chapel service, and imparted to the sick and infirm words of comfort and consolation whenever his ministrations were desired.

Of the inmates admitted during the past year, a much larger proportion of them have been of a more feeble and sickly character than any former year. The medical department is under the charge of Dr. George B. Cogswell, whose whole time has been devoted to the duties of his office. His report of the sickness, births, deaths, and sanitary condition of the house is presented. It is but justice to this gentleman to say that, in his official capacity, no effort or means have been wanting, that, in his opinion, were calculated to heal, relieve, and comfort the sick.

Human efforts are not always found equal to the task of raising the depressed, healing the broken-hearted, relieving the distressed victims of disease, when driven by misfortune, poverty, and sin to seek a final refuge within our doors. Many of our hospital patients are of an age when the constitution has lost its vigor and recuperative power. Many, though young, have sinned away their days of health, and are reaping the inevitable and bitter fruits of a ruined constitution.

Viewed as a mere hospital for the suffering and the dying, our institution presents to the eye of the observer an appalling scene; but when viewed as the last and only refuge of the unfortunate, such institutions are indeed an honor to our Commonwealth. In no respect does modern civilization appear to such advantage as in these exhibitions of public charity; and

in none more than the comfortable homes which are provided throughout her domain for the aged, the insane, the sick, the poor, and the neglected. The feeble veteran, who has endured the voyage of life and suffered shipwreck amid its storms, here finds at last a haven of rest. The weary sojourner, bewildered on his way, around whom the dark night of sorrow and despair has shut down, weak in body and shattered in mind, meets here a friendly welcome and needed hospitality. The child of misfortune, whom poverty and neglect has driven out from the abodes of men to lead a dissolute and sinful life, is gathered into the lap of charity, and under healthful and reforming influences is saved, at least, from speedy destruction. In concluding this brief report I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to acknowledge to you, gentlemen, my obligations for the many kind offices you have done me, in the discharge of my varied, and often, onerous duties.

Respectfully,

L. L. GOODSPEED.

BRIDGEWATER, September 30, 1857.

PHYSICIAN'S REPORT.

To the Inspectors of the State Almshouse at Bridgewater.

GENTLEMEN:—The following Report of the Medical Department of this institution, for the ten months ending September 30, 1857, is herewith respectfully submitted.

Number of patients admitted into hospital, . . .	1,275
Discharged well, or greatly improved, . . .	874
Number remaining in hospital, September 30, 1857, .	175

Number of births in ten months:—

Males,	27
Females,	28
Total,	55

Number of deaths:—

Males,	114
Females,	112
Total,	226

Table showing the ages of those having died:—

Seventy-five years and upwards, . . .	25
Between fifty and seventy-five years, . .	30
twenty-five and fifty years, . . .	36
five and twenty-five, . . .	18
two and five years, . . .	25
six months and two years, . . .	40
Under six months, . . .	52
Total,	226

Table showing the diseases most prevalent, and the number dying of each. (Of course, many of the subjoined diseases were complicated with old complaints.)

Consumption,	.	.	.	.	.	.	60
Old age,	.	.	.	.	.	.	25
General debility,	.	.	.	.	.	.	15
Inanition,	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
Injuries,	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Ascites,	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Marasmus,	.	.	.	.	.	.	25
Pneumonia,	.	.	.	.	.	.	10
Pleurisy,	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Acute disease of head,	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Chronic “ “	.	.	.	.	.	.	5
Typhoid fever,	.	.	.	.	.	.	5
Cholera infantum,	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Convulsions,	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
Whooping cough,	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Apoplexy,	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Dysentery,	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Chronic diarrhoea,	.	.	.	.	.	.	5
Measles,	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Scarlatina,	.	.	.	.	.	.	12
Scrofula,	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Total,	.	.	.	.	.	.	226

To those unacquainted with the class of patients received into our hospitals, the number of deaths may seem too large for the number admitted. But they must take into consideration the condition of most of them at the time of their arrival. Of course, all are from the lowest class of foreigners; their constitutions are broken down by intemperance, exposure to the wet and cold, both before and after they are taken sick. They have lived in “Places,” surrounded with filth and poorly ventilated, and when they are no longer able to obtain the necessaries of life, they apply for help, and are sent to our almshouses by the proper authorities. Many come here in, as it were, a dying condition. Not unfrequently within the last year, from two to

five have been admitted in one day, in the very last stages of disease, a part of whom have died within twenty-four or forty-eight hours after their arrival. A large number of "Kanakas" are sent here from New Bedford. Their complaint is generally one of the lungs. They are shipped on board our whalers that have lost their crews by desertion or death; they know not where they are going; their stock of clothing is poorly fitted, for the native of the South Seas, to make a long cruise in the Northern Ocean with; they contract colds while there, and by the time the ship arrives home, they are in the last stages of consumption. They have no money, no friends—they are sent here to die. The number of this class is rapidly increasing. Of the above deaths, about one-fourth have died of consumption; the average duration of their disease, before coming here, is about one year. All the sick who come here are old "chronic cases," the history and former treatment of which you know nothing of; and it would be of little account if you did, for they are past human aid as a general thing. The most you can do for them is to make them as comfortable as possible the rest of their days. Of the deaths among the children, the greater proportion of them have been sick a long time before coming here, and it is too well known that, in order to save a child, you want to take it in season. A great many children are sent here, from three days to six months old, who have been abandoned by their parents. They are mostly "illegitimate;" being born of diseased parents, they are themselves diseased. They have been exposed to the inclemencies of the weather before coming here; they have been poorly clad and sadly neglected. By the time they arrive here they are generally worn out, or have contracted a severe cold. They soon sicken and die; not with any acute disease, but with "marasmus"—a gradual wasting away. The general health of the better class of inmates has been very good; no prevailing sickness has occurred among the older class. Among the children, during the months of December, 1856, and January, 1857, there were a few deaths from scarlet fever—a disease more to be dreaded, in an institution like this, than any other. In the month of September it broke out again, but did not spread to the extent it was feared it would. During the last three months, we have had over one hundred cases of measles; all have recovered,

except a few cases in which the patient was very much debilitated before it was taken, or was predisposed to lung complaints. It will be seen, by referring to last year's report, that the number of patients admitted during the last ten months exceeds, by more than two hundred, the number admitted during the twelve months previous. As near as I am able to learn, the type of sickness has been of a much more serious nature than that of any preceding year. Whether the year to come will prove any more favorable than the last, time only can show. In conclusion, I will take this opportunity to acknowledge my sincere thanks to L. L. Goodspeed, the superintendent of this institution, for the interest he has always manifested in my department, and for his readiness to provide every thing I have wanted; also, for his kind and valuable counsel, which he has ever been ready to impart. I would also acknowledge my great obligations to Dr. Calvin Pratt, my consulting physician, who has ever been ready and willing to render me all the assistance in his power whenever the occasion required.

G. B. COGSWELL, M. D.,

Attending Physician.

BRIDGEWATER, September 30, 1857.